

Minutes - Police Diversity Board Meeting December 15, 2010, 5:30 p.m.

Attendees: Valentin Rodriguez - Chair  
Yvonne Stroman - Secretary  
Sunilda Tejada - Board Member  
John Kramer - Board Member  
Nicholas Noel, III - Solicitor for the PDB

Absent: Rafael Nunez - Board Member  
Yvette Santiago - Board Member

Other Attendees: Captain Robert Schafer on behalf of Chief William Heim  
Teresa Riquelme - Candidate for Vacancy of the PDB  
Carole Duran - Reporter - Reading Eagle

1. A quorum was recognized by the Chair at 5:45 p.m. and the meeting was called to order.

2. The Minutes of the October 20, 2010, Meeting of the Police Diversity Board was approved pursuant to motion of Member Stroman and seconded by Member Tejada. All in favor.

3. (a) Board Vacancies - Chairman Rodriguez presented Ms. Teresa Riquelme as a candidate for the current vacancy on the PDB. Her resume was produced and reviewed and to be circulated electronically by the Solicitor so everyone has a copy. The Solicitor and Members of the Board asked questions regarding Ms. Riquelme's background and interest and she responded by discussing her past experiences in dealing with community activities and her interest in preventing discrimination.

Upon review of Ms. Riquelme's resume as well as the consideration of any other candidates who have expressed an interest, the Board will vote upon the application at the next regularly scheduled meeting (February 23, 2011). At that time, her name will be submitted to both the City and the PSLC for approval.

(b) Status of ALTA Bi-Lingual Proficiency Test - significant discussion occurred on this matter. Captain Schafer had no new information then what had been provided by Chief Heim at the October meeting and that the test was not yet "available." This raises serious concerns with the Board since the plan back in early 2010 during the discussions leading up to the amendment to the Settlement Agreement to include the bi-lingual proficiency test was to have the test available for the "next cycle of testing." The Board is aware that the latest civil service examination was just recently given this month and, therefore, now would be the optimum time for those who have passed the civil service exam to be given the opportunity to take the bi-lingual proficiency test. Those candidates would also need to be proceeding with their physical examinations, physical fitness testing and other background requirements etc. leading up to a final certification list, hopefully, by the spring of 2011 from which the next police academy would be able to draw. In view of the anticipated departures of a good number of police officers (estimated to be upwards to 50) during the coming year, this is an optimal time to have this test in place and that can have a positive impact on the demographics of the department.

The Solicitor indicated that he would be following up on Thursday with the City's attorney, David MacMain, as well as contacting City officials to obtain more information as to the status of the ALTA exam. To date, we have not seen a copy of any contract as between the City of Reading and ALTA regarding the production of this exam and it would seem that such an agreement would have contained a timeframe for said production.

The Solicitor also indicated that he would be reporting to the Court this current status since the Court should be aware as to the lack of a bi-lingual test at this time. As to where the responsibility lies for not producing the test, that still needs to be determined. However, it was discussed that ALTA representatives supposedly had met with City supervisors relative to the police department in late summer for the purpose of gathering the necessary information to create the customized test for Reading's needs. As reflected in the October 20, Minutes, Chief Heim had indicated that he had no information regarding when the test would be available and the night of this meeting, Captain Schafer placed calls from the meeting to Deputy Chief Talbot and advised the Board that there was still no further information from ALTA as to when the test would be available. Therefore, the Solicitor will take the immediate steps to apply the necessary pressure on the parties to get this matter addressed now. The Solicitor will also follow-up with the Solicitor for the Civil Service Commission to determine the exact date of the civil service exam (since learned to have been 12/11/10) and when the next one will be administered - (currently planned for early May 2011).

(c) Approval of the Fifteenth Quarterly Report - the quarterly report to Judge Rufe dated November 9, 2010, has been submitted to the Court after having been circulated to the Board Members on October 25, with two (2) Members responding that the report was okay and no other response from other Members. Therefore, the report was submitted on November 9, 2010. The Solicitor will file a supplemental report based upon this month's meeting so that the Court is aware of the concerns of the PDB regarding the implementation of the bi-lingual proficiency test.

#### 4. Reports

(a) Chair Rodriguez - asked that Captain Schafer follow-up with Chief Heim with regard to the approved budget for the PDB for 2011. Captain Schafer said he would see that that information is provided.

(b) Solicitor's Report - the Solicitor had nothing additional to report.

(c) Board Members - no other reports (although see Part (f) below).

(d) Chief Heim - Captain Robert Schafer appearing for Chief Heim at this evening's meeting advised that he would follow-up on getting the budget information for 2011. In addition, he would follow-up regarding Chief Heim's report in October regarding the need for the replacement of Sgt. Felix Mateo as the City's Diversity Officer in the department.

(e) and (f) Mr. Geffken and Ms. Hummel were not in attendance and, therefore, no report was received.

5. Unfinished Business - as reflected above, discussion revisited the vacancy of the Police Diversity Officer, Sgt. Felix Mateo who has been reassigned to street duty due to the attrition of officers in the department. The Settlement Agreement requires that the City have a designated City Diversity Officer and Chief Heim had indicated at the October PDB Meeting that he was approaching several Hispanic officers to see who would

be able and available to undertake the task. The Board expressed serious concern over the lack of this position being filled because of recruitment. Sgt. Mateo's efforts, along with other members of the department, was able to produce significant increases in the number of people sitting for the civil service exam which have typically now been in the 200 person range. With the upcoming vacancies occurring in 2011, it is critical that the pipeline of candidates continue to flow and the need for someone in this position to coordinate the department's presence at job fairs, educational institutions and other marketing opportunities is very important.

6. Public Comment - none.

7. **Next meeting of the Police Diversity Board will be on Wednesday, February 23, 2011, at 5:30 p.m.** Member Stroman will advise as to which room we will be assigned.

No further business coming before the Board. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

NOEL, KOVACS & McGUIRE, P.C.

*s/ Nicholas Noel, III*

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Nicholas Noel, III

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